

WATER TRANSFERS

Every year, hundreds of thousands of acre-feet of water are successfully transferred between willing sellers and buyers. Water transfers can improve water availability for all users, including the environment. The Water Transfer Program will implement actions to facilitate water transactions and further develop the statewide water transfer market to play a more effective role in statewide water management. The Water Transfer Program Plan was completed this year along with the following accomplishments:

- Developed and made operational the On Tap California Water Market Information web site.
- Continued development of actions to streamline the current state and federal review and approval processes for water transfers.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES: The goal of the Water Transfer Program is to encourage development of a more effective water transfer market that facilitates water transfers and streamlines the approval process, while protecting water rights, environmental conditions, and local economic interests. The objectives this past year were to identify and begin implementing the actions described in the July 2000 Water Transfer Program Plan. Many of these tasks focus on changing or refining policies and procedures of the agencies responsible for reviewing and approving most water transfer activities – California Department of Water Resources (DWR), US Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), and State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB).

Specifically, efforts this year have focused on four actions:

On Tap web site: CALFED agencies and contractors are developing this water market information web site. CALFED agencies and interested stakeholders were briefed in anticipation of public availability of the web site on December 31. During November, a select group of stakeholders performed "usability testing" on the web site so that refinements could be made prior to the site being publicly available.

Recommendations to streamline current approval processes: As required in the ROD, the CALFED agencies are working closely with the SWRCB Water Transfer Work Group to draft recommendations to streamline the current DWR, USBR, and SWRCB transaction approval processes.

Clarification of carriage water requirements: The Bay-Delta Modeling Forum has undertaken a technical review of models that attempt to quantify carriage water. Expected early in 2001, the outcome of this effort will be used both for the SWRCB Phase 8 Water Right Hearing and by CALFED agencies. In turn, CALFED agencies will use the information to standardize the methodology used to quantify carriage water requirements so that transfer proponents proposing to move water across the Delta can appropriately account for this water assessment. The Forum is a joint agency/stakeholder entity that has a strong record of working to resolve technical disputes.